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# CANADA'S IMMIGRANTS



Canada



FOR REVIEW  
1981 Census of Canada  
Aug 31 1984  
POUR EXAMEN

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# *DESCRIBING "IMMIGRANTS"*

To clarify what is meant by "immigrants" in this report, it is necessary to look at census definitions. For the purpose of census classification, an immigrant is a resident of Canada who is not a Canadian citizen by birth. Thus, persons born outside Canada, except those whose parents are Canadian, are considered immigrants. As well, a few persons born in Canada who were not considered as Canadians at birth but later obtained Canadian resident status are included among the immigrant population.

Thus, "immigrants" are people alive today, who came to settle in Canada, either as children or adults. Most have taken out Canadian citizenship, but some have not. Most can speak English or French, although many may cherish another language and what they derived from another culture. They are all classified as immigrants. Their children who were born here are, of course, not immigrants; they are part of the non-immigrant population according to the census count, even though some sociologists may identify them as "second-generation" Canadians.

At every decennial census it is possible to determine the number of people in the "immigrant" category to see if they make up a large or small proportion of the whole population and to compare their characteristics with those of other Canadians.

Perhaps the main value in such an examination is to ensure that discussion is based on sound data, since in any nation state one of the touchiest subjects, economically and socially, is the immigrant sector. While the facts about immigrants are of particular interest to

ethnic groups, they are also of general interest, and have many uses in the fields of education and government.

It is important to recognize that the characteristics of immigrants are partly determined by changing government policies controlling admissions. If the requirements favour a certain level of education or skill, these may be reflected in the immigrant group. If conditions in some periods were more auspicious for bringing in dependent parents, this may also change the statistics. The main thing to remember is that it is impossible to interpret the figures as a reflection of the characteristics of the source countries. They do, however, show how well immigrants are faring.

*What's  
new  
now?*



# "A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS"

The first "immigrants" to what is now Canada were colonists from France who established permanent settlements in Nova Scotia and Quebec in the seventeenth century. The flow of immigrants from France, which was never very heavy, decreased markedly with the English conquest in 1763. Until 1815 immigration was quite light, with some administrators and traders arriving from Great Britain, and United Empire Loyalists coming from the United States.

Between 1815 and 1867 more than 1 million immigrants landed on Canadian soil. Great Britain was the major source, but the flow from other European countries increased as well. This refers only to people landing at Canadian ports; many of them subsequently went to the United States.

After Confederation in 1867 and until the turn of the century, the British Isles continued to predominate as a source of immigrants to Canada, although significant numbers came from countries such as Germany and Norway. During this period, the trend of immigration was upward, but emigration, almost entirely to the United States, resulted in a net migration loss.

The years from 1900 to World War I saw a flood of immigrants that has never been surpassed. In addition to homesteaders who went to the Prairies, labourers were attracted to the rapidly growing eastern cities. For the first time since Confederation, Canada experienced positive net migration. Between 1899 and 1914 nearly 3 million immigrants arrived. In fact, the total of 400,870 who came in 1913 is a record that has never been equalled. To some extent, the source countries shifted. Immigration

from the British Isles increased, but there was more dramatic growth in immigration from other parts of Europe: Austria-Hungary, Russia, Italy and Scandinavia.

From the beginning of World War I to the end of World War II, immigration to Canada slowed down. Numbers dropped from the 1913 high to an annual average of 126,000 in the 1920s. Between 1932 and 1945, yearly immigration never rose above 20,000, and in fact, during the Depression years of the 1930s, there was a net migration loss. Great Britain continued to be the leading source of immigrants, followed by Germany, Austria, Scandinavia and the Ukraine. Fewer than 6% were of non-European origin.

After World War II the flow of immigration varied, fluctuating with events inside and outside Canada. A total of 5 million came in the period 1946-1981. Between 1945 and 1961 more than 2 million were admitted, the highest number since the early years of the twentieth century, due largely to the arrival of war brides and of refugees. During the 1950s the annual average was more than 150,000, but after a peak in 1957, numbers fell to 72,000 in 1961.

In the 1960s annual immigration averaged 141,000. This decade marked a change in the countries of origin of immigrants, who were becoming more diverse in national background.

This trend continued throughout the 1970s. The average annual number, 144,000, was up slightly from the previous decade. A peak of more than 200,000 was reached in 1974, partly because an amnesty legitimized the status of a number who had entered the country as visitors.

Perhaps the most notable feature of post-war immigration was the change in country of origin. Although Great Britain has remained the single largest source, there has been some shift from Western and Southern Europe to Asian and Caribbean countries.

# *GOVERNMENT IMMIGRATION POLICIES*

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After 1867, the immigration policy established by the post-Confederation government set the tone for the future: immigration was to be tied to the economic needs of Canada. The immediate concern was settlement of the West. Thus, development of that region was one of the foundations of immigration policy, although it was also influenced by the need for industrial workers in eastern cities. Another policy factor was a strong preference for European, particularly British, settlers.

Policy from 1930 to 1943 was affected by public opinion that was generally unfavourable to immigration. During the Depression, unemployment had risen to unprecedented levels. Immigrants were no longer required for industry, and all the best accessible land had been settled.

From the end of World War II to 1961, immigration was regarded as necessary to maintain population growth, to enlarge the pool of labour and to create a larger domestic market for new industries. Conditions in the 1950s were generally favourable to immigration.

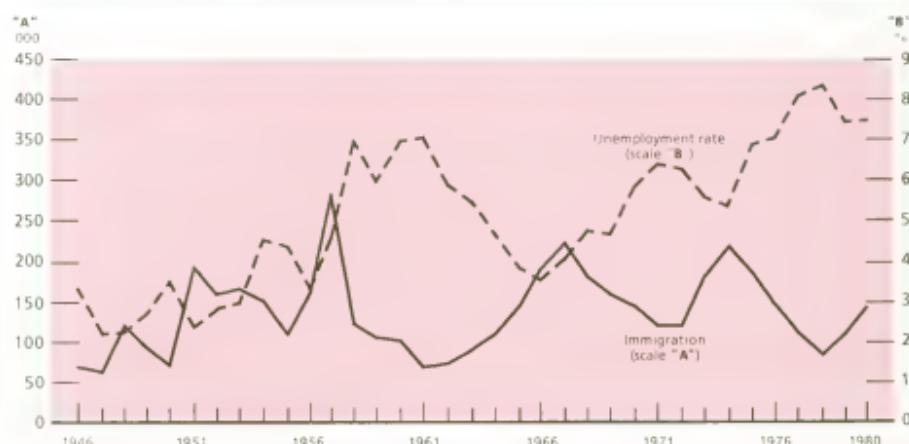
The 1960s was a decade of major changes in Canada's economic and social structure. The need for highly skilled trades and professions as well as less skilled occupations in manufacturing and construction created a demand for immigrants with different backgrounds and qualifications. Thus, immigration policy became linked more directly than ever to economic conditions.

In 1967 the "points system" was introduced. Ethnic considerations were not part of the policy. A method was established for selecting immigrants whereby points were allotted for various factors, particularly education and occupational skills. The object was to admit people who would fit the needs of Canada's economy and labour market. Three categories of immigrants were established: independent, sponsored and nominated.

"Independent" immigrants had to meet the requirements of the points system. However, the other two categories reflected a new aspect of immigration policy - concern to facilitate family reunion. "Sponsored" immigrants were close relatives of persons in Canada. They could be admitted without qualifying under the points system. "Nominated" immigrants, generally more distant relatives, had to qualify under the points system, but they were given points for being related to permanent residents of Canada.

A new Immigration Act came into force in 1978. The points system was revised to place less emphasis on education and more on occupational experience and demand. In particular, entrepreneurs who could create employment in Canada were encouraged to immigrate. The most important policy change was the decision that the Minister of Employment and

## Level of Immigration and Unemployment Rates, Canada, 1946-1980



Source: Employment and Immigration Canada, Immigration and Demographic Policy Group, *Immigration Statistics, 1981* (Annual); Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey Division, *The Labour Force (Monthly)*, Catalogue No. 71-001

Immigration would set annual immigration planning levels after consultation with the provinces and a review of regional demographic needs and economic conditions.

The new Act specifies three classes of immigrants. The family class consists of close relatives of permanent residents of Canada. They are not assessed under the points system, and their sponsoring relatives agree to provide them with lodging and care for up to 10 years. Refugees (persons who fear persecution if they return to their former countries of residence) are admitted to Canada without qualifying under the points system. The category of independent and other immigrants includes individuals who have to meet all the criteria for admission. Within this group, assisted relatives are people other than those of the family class who have kin in Canada willing to support them for up to five years, and who receive points because of this. Thus, they may qualify

even if they have fewer points on other factors. Relatives, like other independent applicants must, nevertheless, pass a labour market occupational demand test.

These changes in government policy have obviously influenced immigration. Regardless of policy changes it is interesting to observe that in the post-war period the level of immigration seems to be associated with the unemployment rate. When unemployment was low, immigration tended to be high and vice versa.

This report discusses those people who were identified as immigrants by the 1981 Census. It tells when they arrived in Canada, where they came from, and where they settled. It also compares their demographic and socio-economic characteristics with those of the non-immigrant population.

## **Highlights from the 1981 Census show that:**

- The majority of immigrants were young adults when they arrived.
- Great Britain was the leading source country, and Europe accounted for 6 out of 10 in Canada's immigrant population.
- Four out of 10 Toronto residents were immigrants.
- The average age of immigrants was about 43, compared with nearly 30 for non-immigrants.
- Three out of 10 persons 65 years or over were immigrants.
- On Census Day, just over 5% of immigrants could speak neither English nor French.
- Immigrants were more apt to have university degrees than were non-immigrants, but there was also a larger percentage with less than Grade 9 education.
- The average income of immigrants was higher than that of other Canadians.
- Immigrants had a greater tendency than non-immigrants to live in multiple-family households, yet there was also a larger percentage living alone.
- Three-quarters of those immigrants who had arrived in Canada at least three years prior to the census had become citizens.



# *THE CHANGING NUMBERS*

On Census Day, June 3, 1981, there were 3.8 million immigrants in Canada, making up 16% of the total population. This is higher than the percentage in the United States (5%), but lower than in Australia (20%). It is also slightly above the percentage in Canada in 1971 (15.3%), but well below our peak periods. The high point in this century was in 1921 (22.3%).

Table 1

Immigrant Population, Number and Percentage of the Total Population, Canada, 1901-1981

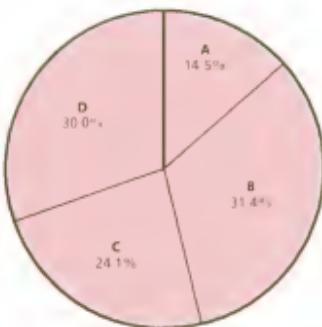
Year <sup>(1)</sup>	Immigrants	
	Number ('000)	Percentage of total population (%)
1901	699.5	13.0
1911	1,587.0	22.0
1921	1,955.7	22.3
1931	2,307.5	22.2
1941	2,018.8	17.5
1951 <sup>(2)</sup>	2,059.9	14.7
1961	2,844.3	15.6
1971	3,295.5	15.3
1981	3,843.3	16.0

(1) Figures for 1901 to 1971 include a small number of Canadian citizens by birth who were born abroad.

(2) Includes Newfoundland for the first time.

Source: 1961 and 1971 Censuses of Canada bulletins.  
1981 Census of Canada

Percentage Distribution by Period of Immigration of the Immigrant Population, Canada, 1981



Source: 1981 Census of Canada

### When They Arrived

Among the people identified as immigrants at the time of the 1981 Census, close to a third, 1.15 million, had come to Canada in the past decade,\* and another quarter had arrived between 1960 and 1971. In all, about 85% had arrived since World War II.

### Where They Came From

Canada's immigrant population in 1981 mirrored a sequence of changes in the list of nations which made up the predominant countries of origin. Overall, more than 6 in 10 had come from Europe, but this varied by period of immigration.

The largest percentage of immigrants from Great Britain, Scandinavia, Poland, Austria and the U.S.S.R. had come before 1961. The countries of Northern and Western Europe accounted for half of the immigrants who arrived in that period. Southern Europe, 17%, Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R., 20%, and the United States made up another 8%. Very few who had come before 1961 were from Third World countries. Just 3% were from Asia, 1% from countries in the Caribbean and Central and South America, and all of Africa accounted for less than half of one per cent (0.4%).

By the 1960s the pattern of source countries had shifted away from Northern and Western Europe toward Southern Europe, Asia and the Caribbean and Central and South America. Although Great Britain remained the single most important source, 3 out of 10 immigrants who had come during this decade were from Southern Europe. The most spectacular increases were for immigrants from Asia and the Caribbean and Central and South America, whose shares of the total rose to 12% and 8%, respectively. Changes in policy and administration in the 1960s were probably factors in these shifts.

\* Although annual immigration during the 1970s averaged 144,000, some did not stay or had died before Census Day, so that the total remaining from that decade's immigration was 1.15 million.

Table 2

**Ten Leading Countries of Birth of Immigrants for Each Period of Immigration, Canada, 1981**

**Before 1961**

Country of birth	Number	% of total
Great Britain	524,900	29.8
Italy	214,700	12.2
United States	136,900	7.8
Poland	118,000	6.7
U.S.S.R.	112,600	6.4
Netherlands	112,400	6.4
Federal Republic of Germany	107,200	6.1
Yugoslavia	39,100	2.2
German Democratic Republic	28,400	1.6
Austria	28,300	1.6
<b>Ten leading countries as a percentage of all immigrants who arrived before 1961</b>	<b>80.8</b>	

**1961-1970**

Country of birth	Number	% of total
Great Britain	195,300	21.1
Italy	141,000	15.2
United States	67,000	7.2
Portugal	57,300	6.2
Greece	40,700	4.4
Yugoslavia	33,200	3.6
Federal Republic of Germany	31,400	3.4
India	28,200	3.0
Jamaica	23,600	2.5
France	19,100	2.1
<b>Ten leading countries as a percentage of all immigrants who arrived during the 1961-1970 period</b>	<b>68.7</b>	

**1971-1981**

Country of birth	Number	% of total
Great Britain	158,800	13.8
United States	97,600	8.5
India	75,100	6.5
Portugal	66,400	5.8
Philippines	55,300	4.8
Jamaica	49,900	4.3
Socialist Republic of Vietnam	49,400	4.3
Hong Kong	42,200	3.7
Italy	29,100	2.5
Guyana	27,500	2.4
<b>Ten leading countries as a percentage of all immigrants who arrived during the 1971-1981 period</b>	<b>56.6</b>	

Source: 1981 Census of Canada.

In the last decade, immigrants from these areas have represented even greater proportions of all arrivals. The 1981 count of the 1.15 million who had come after 1970 showed that 33% were from Asia and 16% from the Caribbean and Central and South America. The proportion from Africa was just 5.5%, but this marked a considerable increase over the 0.4% of those who had arrived before 1961.

Europe remained the leading source of immigrants, although it represented just 34% of those who had come in the last decade. Great Britain was the origin of only 14%. Particularly noticeable was the decline of Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R., which accounted for 20% of pre-1961 immigrants, but just over 3% of the latest arrivals. Restrictions on emigration from these countries play a role in these changes. The percentage from the United States held its own and even gained a little, rising to 8.5% of the 1971-1981 immigrants.

Over the years, not only have the sources of immigrants shifted, but they have also become more diverse. The census showed that about 80% of the immigrants who had arrived before 1961 were from just 10 countries. But for the 1971-1981 decade, the 10 leading countries accounted for just 57% of the immigrants who had come during those years.

## Age at Immigration

People generally immigrate when they are young adults. More than half of them came to Canada between the ages of 14 and 35.

About a third of all immigrants were younger than 15 when they arrived. Immigrants who had come when they were 35 years or older made up only 15% of the total. Women were more likely to have immigrated in their later years than men. Of those who had come in the last five years (1976-1981), 11% of the women but just 8% of the men were 55 years or over.

## Languages Spoken

English was the mother tongue of 1.6 million of Canada's 3.8 million immigrants, and French was the mother tongue of about 150,000. The majority, totalling more than 2 million, had a mother tongue that was neither English nor French. However, as home, about 42% of this non-official language group used one of Canada's official languages more frequently than their mother tongue: 40% spoke English and 2%, French.

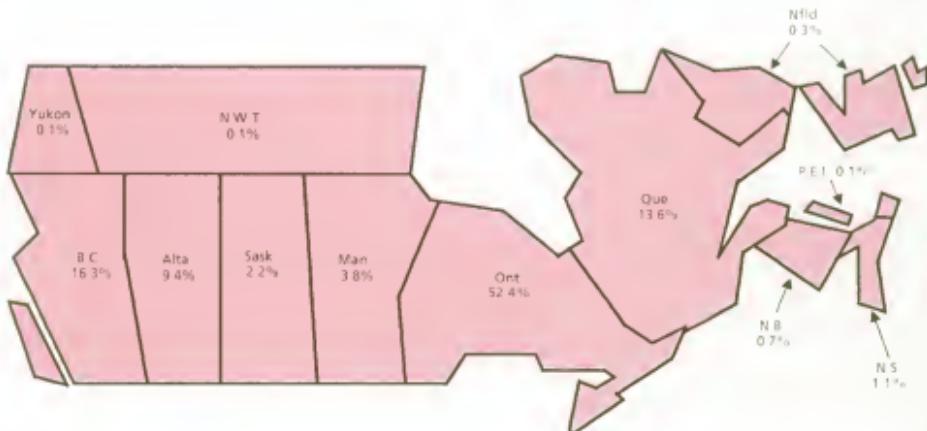
The tendency to make such a language shift was related to when they came to Canada and how old they were at that time. The earlier the period of immigration and the younger they were when they arrived, the more likely were immigrants to have switched languages.

A smaller percentage of immigrants in Quebec had adopted a different home language than had those in the rest of the country. About two-thirds of Quebec's immigrants had retained their mother tongue. The proportion who had switched to English (21%) was nearly double the proportion who had adopted French. However, among the most recent immigrants, those shifting to French at home exceeded the number using English.

The province with the second strongest retention of mother tongue was Ontario where 60% continued to speak their first language at home. Most of the rest had adopted English, while fewer than half of one per cent had switched to French.

Chart 5

Percentage Distribution by Province and Territory of the Immigrant Population, Canada, 1981



Source: 1981 Census of Canada

Use of a non-official language at home does not mean that an individual is incapable of speaking one of the official languages. Although 1.2 million immigrants used a non-official language at home, just 212,000 were unable to speak English or French.

### Where They Settled

According to the 1981 Census, more than half of all immigrants were living in Ontario, although that province contained just a third of Canada's total population. Immigrants were also somewhat overrepresented in British Columbia where 16% of them lived, while the province accounted for 11% of the total population.

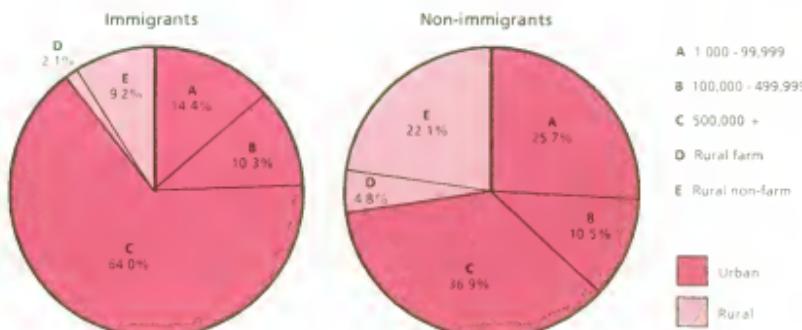
Immigrants were underrepresented in the Atlantic provinces, which had 9% of the total population but only 2% of all immigrants. Numbers were also relatively low in Quebec which was home to 26% of the total population, but just 14% of all immigrants.

Half of Saskatchewan's immigrant population had come to Canada before 1946, and better than 20% of the immigrants in four other provinces - Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Manitoba - were pre-1946 arrivals.

According to the 1981 Census, immigrants tended to be city dwellers. About 74% of them lived in cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants, compared with just 48% of the non-immigrant population. In fact, half of all immigrants in Canada clustered in three large metropolitan areas: Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver.

Chart 4

Percentage Distribution by Urban Size Group, Rural Farm and Rural Non-farm, of the Immigrant and Non-immigrant Populations, Canada, 1981



The more recent the period of immigration, the higher the percentage in urban areas. Close to three-quarters of those who had come in the 1970s lived in metropolitan areas with a population of 500,000 or more. This was true of just 45% of those who had come before 1946. These pre-1946 arrivals had the highest proportion in rural districts (18%). Non-immigrants, however, were more strongly represented in rural areas (27%) than any immigrant group. Of the total immigrant population at the time of the census, only 2% actually lived on farms, compared with 5% of non-immigrants.

In some metropolitan areas, immigrants made up a considerable proportion of the population in 1981. Toronto ranked highest with 38%. Vancouver was second with 30%, and Hamilton third with 26%. Although Montréal had the second largest concentration of immigrants in Canada (over 450,000), they made up only 16% of that metropolitan area.

Table 3

**Immigrants as a Percentage of the Population of Canada's Ten Largest Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs), Canada, 1981**

CMA	Total population	Immigrants	
		Number	Percentage of total population
Toronto	2,975,495	1,129,340	38.0
Montréal	2,798,045	450,660	16.1
Vancouver	1,250,610	370,240	29.6
Ottawa-Hull	711,920	98,545	13.8
Edmonton	650,895	128,060	19.7
Calgary	587,020	124,105	21.1
Winnipeg	578,625	110,915	19.2
Québec	569,005	12,255	2.2
Hamilton	537,645	140,240	26.1
St. Catharines-Niagara	301,565	66,280	22.0

Source: 1981 Census of Canada.

# *DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS*

## **Sex Distribution**

Traditionally, more men than women immigrate. This was especially true early in the century when there were 158 men for every 100 women in Canada's immigrant population. However, over the decades, the gap in the sex ratio gradually narrowed so that in 1981, for the first time, immigrant women outnumbered immigrant men. This convergence was caused by several factors. Among them were the increasing mortality of men who had immigrated in the pre-war years, the higher immigration of female dependents of men who had migrated earlier and recent immigration policy encouraging family reunification.

## **Age**

Because the majority of people who immigrate do so when they are young adults, the age composition of the immigrant population differs markedly from that of non-immigrants. Any children born to immigrants after their arrival are, of course, non-immigrants. Consequently, unless the most recent immigrant streams contain large numbers of children, the immigrant population will rapidly tend to become middle-aged or elderly.

The average age of immigrants in 1981 was about 43; the average age for non-immigrants was almost 30. Compared to 36% of the non-immigrant population, only 12% of immigrants were younger than 20. Positions were reversed at the other end of the age scale: 17% of immigrants were 65 years or over, but only 8% of non-immigrants were in this age group. In fact, 3 out of every 10 persons 65 years or over were immigrants.

Table 4

**Number of Men per 100 Women, Immigrant and Non-immigrant Populations, Canada, 1911-1981**

Year	Immigrants(1)	Non-immigrants
1911	158	103
1921	125	102
1931	129	102
1941	121	102
1951	112	101
1961	107	101
1971	101	100
1981	98	99

(1) Figures for 1911 to 1971 include a small number of Canadian citizens by birth who were born abroad.

Source: 1961 and 1971 Censuses of Canada bulletins.  
1981 Census of Canada.

Chart 5

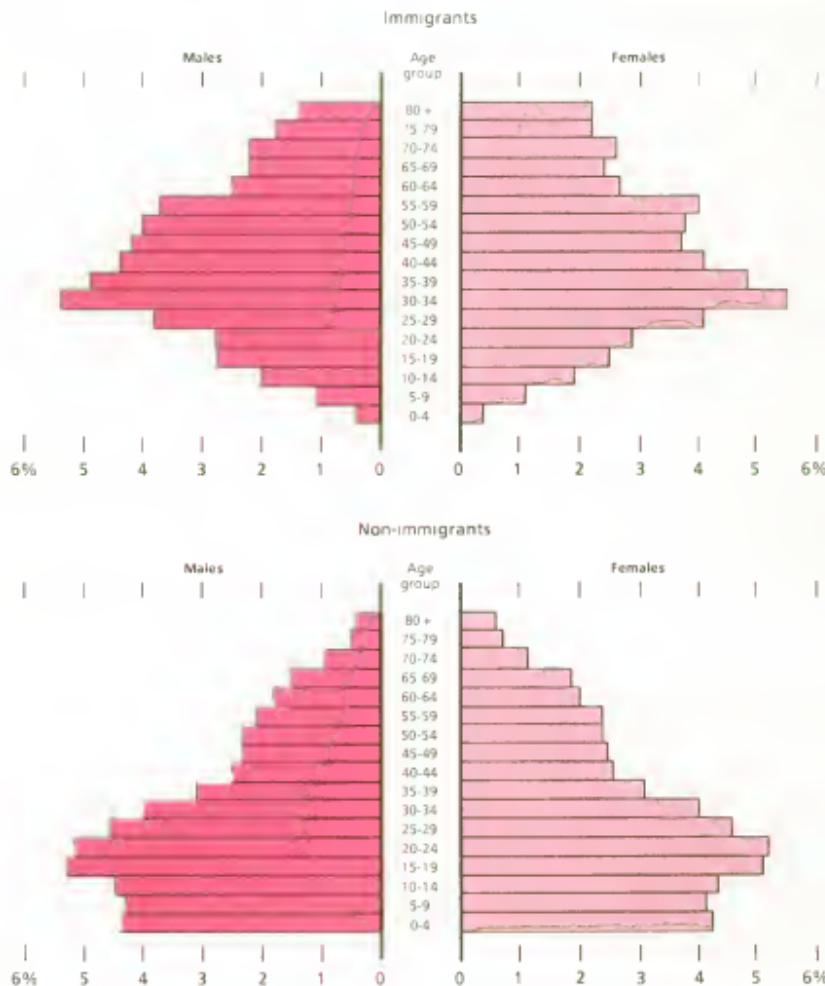
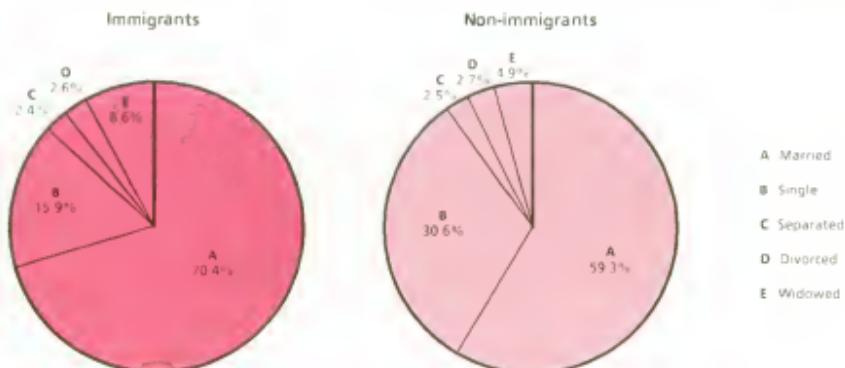
Age-sex Distribution of the Immigrant and Non-immigrant Populations,  
Canada, 1981

Chart 6

Percentage Distribution by Marital Status of the Immigrant and Non-immigrant Populations  
15 Years and Over, Canada, 1981



Source: 1981 Census of Canada

### Marital Status

Like other Canadians, most immigrants were married, but the proportion was higher: 70% versus 59%.

Immigrants were about twice as likely to be widowed and half as likely to be single as the rest of the population. However, considering their age distribution, with relatively few young people and a larger proportion of elderly, this is not surprising.

In the 65 or over age group, 54% of immigrant women were widowed, compared with 44% of their Canadian-born contemporaries. This may be partly due to the immigration of widows; after her husband has died, a woman may immigrate to Canada to join family members who came earlier.

### Family Structure

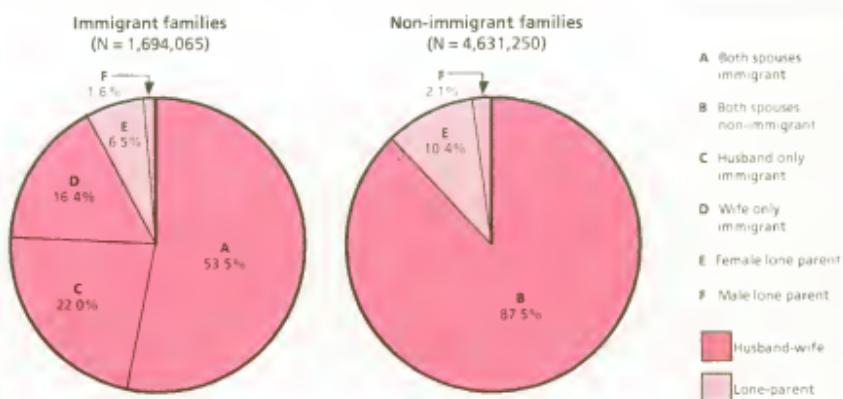
In 1981 there were 6.3 million families in Canada. The largest number, 5.6 million, were husband-wife families. Among these, immigrant couples accounted for 16%. Those in which only the husband was an immigrant were another 7%, and those in which only the wife was an immigrant, 5%. Thus, in 28% of all husband-wife families, at least one spouse was an immigrant.

The proportion of lone parents who were immigrants was lower. Immigrants headed 19% of the 714,000 lone-parent families counted in 1981.

Looking at immigrant families (where one or both spouses or the lone parent was an immigrant), nearly 92% were of the husband-wife variety, compared with 87.5% of non-immigrant families. Only 8% of immigrant families were headed by lone parents, while this was true of 12.5% of non-immigrant families.

Chart 7

## Percentage Distribution by Structure of Immigrant and Non-immigrant Families, Canada, 1981



Source: 1981 Census of Canada

## Number of Children

The 1981 Census showed that women who had come to Canada as immigrants had borne fewer children than non-immigrants. The average number of children per 1,000 ever-married immigrant women was 2,437 compared with 2,509 for non-immigrants.

However, childbearing varied according to age group. The highest rate of childbearing was among women 45 years or over who had immigrated in the last decade.

Table 5

## Number of Children Born per 1,000 Ever-married Immigrant and Non-immigrant Women, by Age Group and Period of Immigration, Canada, 1981

Period of immigration	Age group			
	Total	15-44	45-64	65+
Arrived before 1961	2,624	2,092	2,750	2,810
Arrived 1961-1970	2,250	1,978	2,668	3,341
Arrived 1971-1981	2,192	1,661	3,736	3,730
Total immigrants	2,437	1,884	2,862	2,928
Non-immigrants	2,509	1,758	3,476	3,390

Source: 1981 Census of Canada

## Type of Households

Immigrants are more likely than non-immigrants to live in multiple-family households. The proportion of all immigrants in such households was 4.7% in 1981, compared with 1.7% of non-immigrants. The percentage rose to 9% of those who had come in the last 10 years. Fully 20% of the elderly immigrants who had arrived in that period were living in multiple-family households.

In the majority of cases, these multiple-family households consisted of related families. Immigrants made up 16% of Canada's population, but they represented 25% of all married children and their spouses living with parents. Even more noticeable were the numbers of immigrant parents and parents-in-law residing in their children's homes. In 1981, close to 200,000 people had this living arrangement; over half of them (54.5%) were immigrants.

It was also more common for immigrants, especially the elderly, to live alone. Of the whole immigrant group, 9.5% were living alone in 1981 compared with less than 7% of non-immigrants. The high rate of living alone among those who had come before 1961 probably reflects the fact that this group contains many older persons.

Chart 8

Percentage of Immigrants and Non-immigrants Living in Multiple-family Households, by Period of Immigration, Canada, 1981

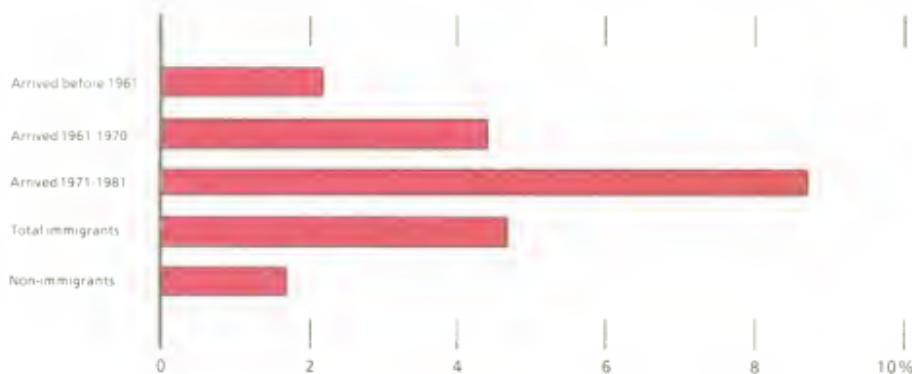
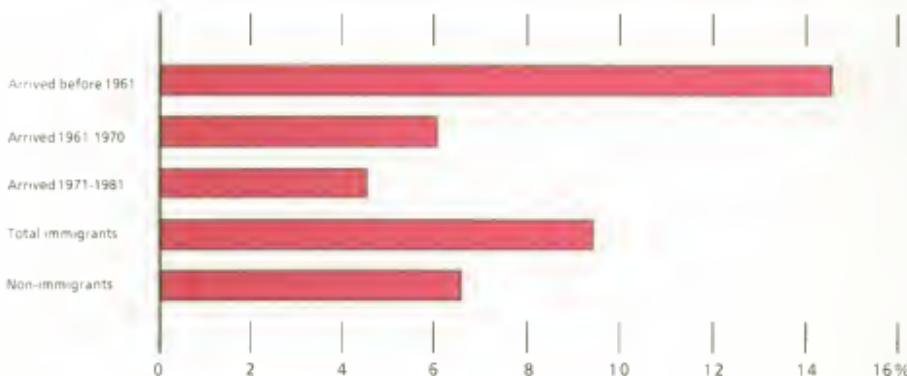


Chart 9

Percentage of Immigrants and Non-immigrants Living Alone,  
by Period of Immigration, Canada, 1981



Source: 1981 Census of Canada

# EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Results of the 1981 Census revealed some differences in the level of education of immigrants and non-immigrants.

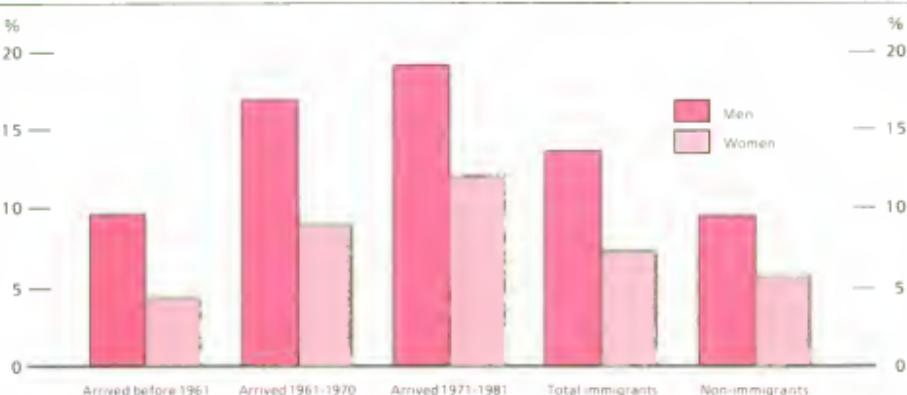
Two immigrant groups contained a large proportion of university graduates: those who had come to Canada as children and were educated here, and those who had arrived after 1961 when they were aged between 25 and 44 and probably had to qualify under the points system. Ten per cent of the former and close to 20% of the latter were university degree-holders.

On the other hand, 57% of the people who had immigrated when they were 65 years or over had less than Grade 9 education.

The most recent immigrants tended to be the best educated. Only 7% of those who had come before 1961 were university graduates, and one-third had less than Grade 9. Immigration policy throughout the 1960s and 1970s stressed education and occupational skills. Of those who had come in the 1971-1981 decade, degree-holders made up 15%.

Chart 10

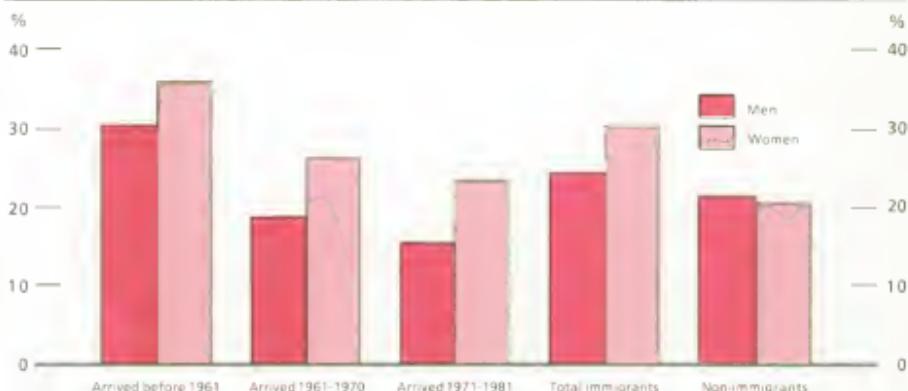
Percentage of the Immigrant and Non-immigrant Populations 15 Years and Over Not Attending School Full-time With University Degrees, by Sex and Period of Immigration, Canada, 1981



Source: 1981 Census of Canada

Chart 11

## Percentage of the Immigrant and Non-immigrant Populations 15 Years and Over Not Attending School Full-time With Less than Grade 9, Canada, 1981



Source: 1981 Census of Canada

Overall, 10.5% of immigrants had degrees as opposed to 8% of non-immigrants. The difference holds for both sexes and at all ages under 65. Among men, 14% of immigrants had degrees, compared to just 9.5% of non-immigrants. The corresponding proportions for women were 7% and 6%.

While many immigrants were highly educated, another 27.5% had less than Grade 9 compared with 21% of non-immigrants. For both immigrants and non-immigrants, this level of education was more prevalent among older people, but the difference between immigrants and non-immigrants remained.

Less than a Grade 9 education was more frequent among immigrant women: 31% as opposed to 24% of immigrant men. This contrasts with non-immigrants, among whom men were slightly more likely than women to have less than Grade 9.

Trades certificates and diplomas were less common among recent immigrants. Of those who had arrived before 1961, 4.4% held such credentials, but the proportion dropped below 3% among immigrants who had come in the 1971-1981 decade.

# IMMIGRANTS AND THE LABOUR FORCE

Immigrants' age and the length of time they have been in Canada affect their labour force activity. A relatively high percentage of those who had come before 1961 were over 65 in 1981, and thus, were less likely to be in the labour force. However, nearly as large a proportion of those who came in 1980 and 1981 did not participate in the labour force. This may have been partly because some of them were learning English or French. This latter group also had the highest percentage unemployed. Immigrants who had arrived between 1960 and 1980 were more likely to have jobs than were other Canadians. More than 8 out of 10 of the men were employed, compared with 7 out of 10 non-immigrant men. Also, a smaller percentage were unemployed: less than 4% in contrast to close to 6% of non-immigrant men. The pattern was the same for women. Nearly 6 in 10 of those who had come to Canada between 1960 and 1980 had jobs. This was the case for fewer than half of non-immigrant women, although the percentages of women unemployed were about the same.

Immigrants were more apt to be full-time year-round workers than non-immigrants. However, of those who arrived in 1980 and 1981, just 11% had full-time year-round jobs; about 40% worked part-time and 50% had not worked in 1980.

Nearly the same percentages of immigrant and non-immigrant workers were wage and salary earners (about 93%) and were self-employed (around 7%). But among men who had immigrated before 1961, self-employment stood at 12%. The rate declined among more recent arrivals to 3.5% for those who came in 1980 and 1981.

More than 95% of all the women with jobs were paid workers. Self-employment rates were much lower for women than for men. Nonetheless, immigrant women, particularly if they had arrived before 1961, were slightly more apt to be self-employed than other women.

A higher percentage of immigrant than non-immigrant men had managerial, professional or technical jobs: 28% versus 23%. Another quarter of immigrant men were in processing, machining and product fabricating. The proportion engaged in farming, 3%, was about half the proportion for non-immigrant men.

Chart 12

Percentage Distribution by Labour Force Activity of the Immigrant and Non-immigrant Populations  
15 Years and Over, by Sex and Period of Immigration, Canada, 1981

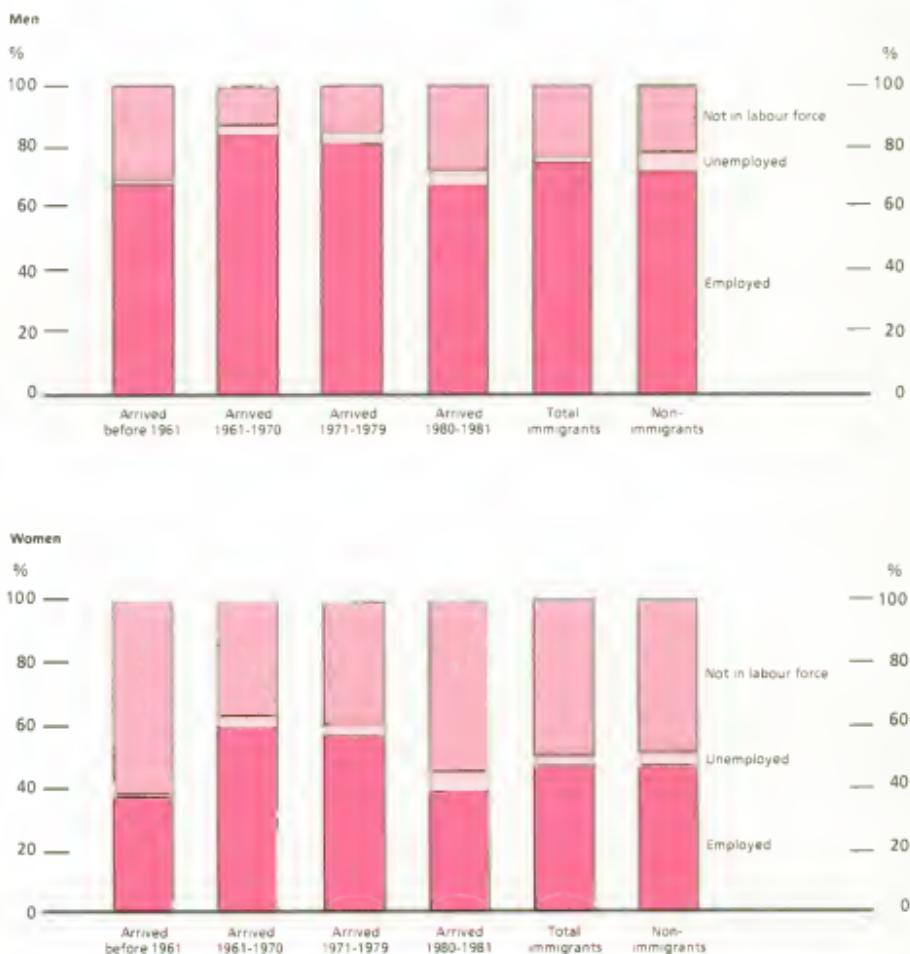
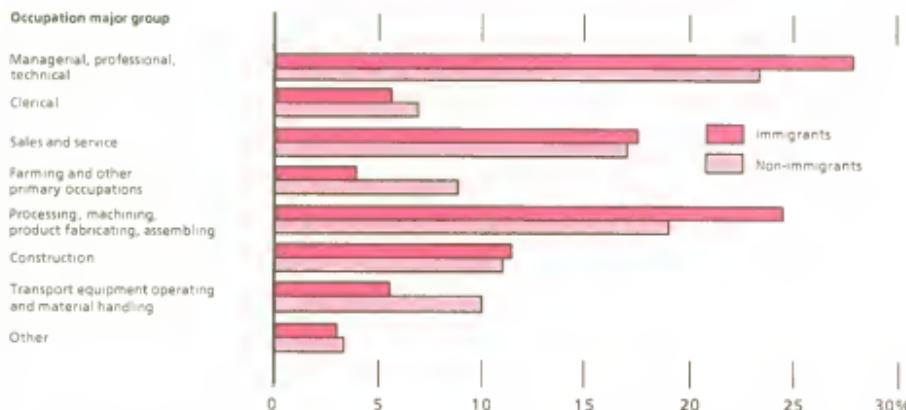


Chart 13

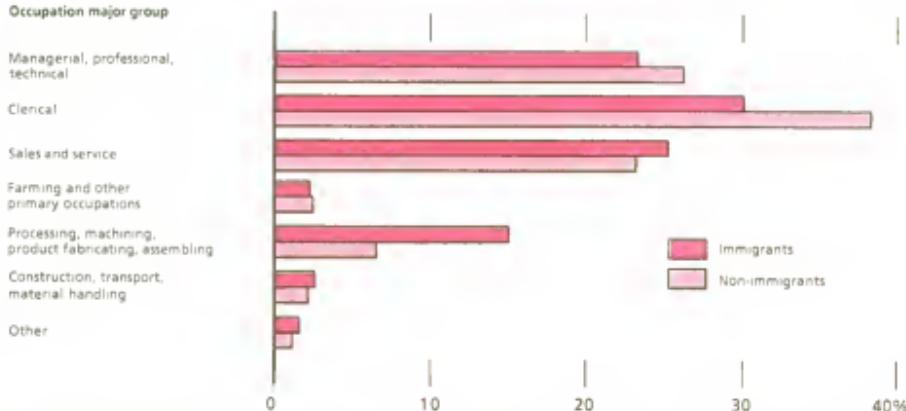
Percentage Distribution by Occupation Major Groups of the Immigrant and Non-immigrant Male Labour Force 15 Years and Over Not Attending School Full-time, Canada, 1981



Source: 1981 Census of Canada

Chart 14

Percentage Distribution by Occupation Major Groups of the Immigrant and Non-immigrant Female Labour Force 15 Years and Over Not Attending School Full-time, Canada, 1981



Source: 1981 Census of Canada

As with their Canadian-born counterparts, the top occupational group for immigrant women was the clerical category, but they were not so heavily concentrated in this occupation. Their representation in sales and service was somewhat higher than that of non-immigrant women, while in the managerial, technical and professional category it was slightly lower. Immigrant women were much more likely to have processing, machining or product fabricating occupations, with 15% in this group compared with only 6% for non-immigrant women.

# *IMMIGRANTS AND INCOME\**

The average 1980 income of immigrants was higher than that of other Canadians. Non-immigrants averaged \$12,800, which amounted to only 91% of the \$14,100 average for immigrants. The difference held for both sexes. However, male immigrants who arrived in the last decade had incomes somewhat below the non-immigrant average.

The proportion of immigrants with 1980 incomes greater than \$25,000 exceeded that of non-immigrants. Again, period of immigration had an effect, as the percentage among those who had come before 1971 was higher, and among later arrivals, somewhat lower. Fully one-quarter of the men who had immigrated before 1971 had incomes above \$25,000 in 1980.

If employment earnings alone are considered, the gap between immigrants and non-immigrants narrows. The average 1980 employment income of non-immigrants who worked mostly full-time year-round was 95% of immigrant earnings.

The average employment income of immigrant men who worked full-time year-round was higher than that of non-immigrant men. But among women, the average was reduced by recent arrivals whose earnings tended to be low, and so was slightly less than the non-immigrant average. Both men and women who had come before 1971 and were working full-time year-round earned more than non-immigrants.

\* Income figures exclude immigrants who arrived in 1980 and 1981.

Table 6

Average<sup>(1)</sup> 1980 Income of the Immigrant and Non-immigrant Populations 15 Years and Over, by Period of Immigration and Sex, Canada, 1981

Period of immigration	Total	Men	Women
	\$	\$	\$
Arrived before 1971	14,500	19,100	9,000
Arrived 1971-1979	12,600	16,300	8,400
Total immigrants <sup>(2)</sup>	14,100	18,500	8,900
Non-immigrants	12,800	16,600	8,300

(1) For persons with income.

(2) Excludes immigrants who arrived in 1980 and 1981.

Source: 1981 Census of Canada.

Table 7

## Percentage of the Immigrant and Non-immigrant Populations 15 Years and Over With 1980 Income of \$25,000 or More, by Period of Immigration and Sex, Canada, 1981

Period of immigration	Total	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Arrived before 1971	15.5	25.4	3.9
Arrived 1971-1979	10.3	17.4	2.2
Total immigrants <sup>(1)</sup>	14.4	23.7	3.6
Non-immigrants	12.0	19.5	3.2

(1) Excludes immigrants who arrived in 1980 and 1981.

Source: 1981 Census of Canada.

Wages and salaries constituted about 75% of the 1980 income of both immigrants and non-immigrants, although the percentage for immigrants was lower. Immigrants received proportionately more of their income from self-employment, investments and Old Age Security and Canada Pension Plan payments than did non-immigrants. Smaller shares came from farm self-employment, unemployment insurance and other transfer payments.

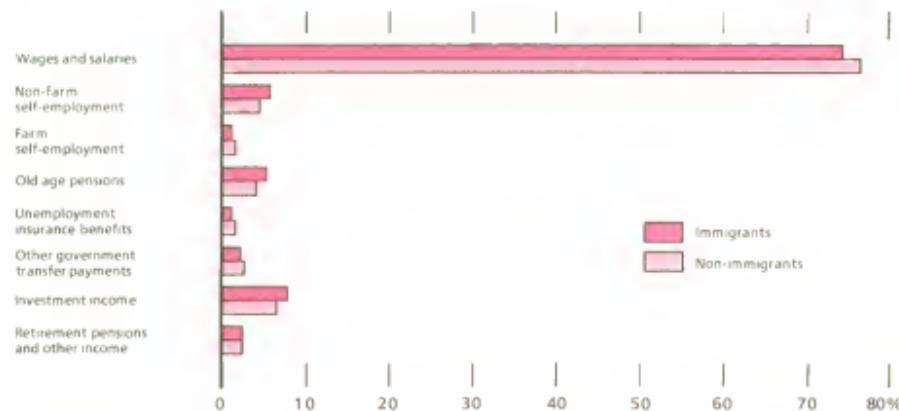
Immigrants who arrived in the last decade were more dependent on wages and salaries than those who had come in earlier periods. More than 86% of their 1980 income was derived from this source in contrast to just 71% of the income of earlier arrivals.

The percentage of elderly immigrants' income made up by Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplements and Canada/Quebec Pension Plan payments was larger than that for non-immigrants. For example, women aged 65 or over who had immigrated before 1971 received 53% of their income in this form. The corresponding proportion for elderly non-immigrant women was 49%. These immigrant women were also more dependent on other government transfer payments than were their non-immigrant counterparts.

Immigrant men aged 25 to 44 who had arrived before 1971 led all other groups, immigrant and non-immigrant, in the share of their income derived from self-employment (8%).

Chart 15

Composition of 1980 Income, by Source, Immigrant and Non-immigrant Populations  
15 Years and Over, Canada, 1981



Source: 1981 Census of Canada



# LOW INCOME\* AMONG FAMILIES AND UNATTACHED INDIVIDUALS

Low income economic families or unattached individuals are those below the "low income cut-offs", which are established by taking into account family income, family size and area of residence.\*\* The figures showing low income in 1980 indicate a considerable difference between recent arrivals and long-established residents in the immigrant population.

Overall, of the immigrants who lived in families, 15% were in low income families, compared with 13% for non-immigrants. However, the rate for pre-1961 immigrants was just 9%, in contrast to 16.5% for those who arrived in the last decade.

Elderly immigrants, regardless of when they came to Canada, had a greater probability of being members of low income families than their non-immigrant contemporaries. Just 10% of non-immigrants aged 65 or over who were living with their families were in the low income category. The corresponding proportions among immigrants were 11% for those who had come before 1961, 14% for the 1961-1970 group and 22.5% among the most recent arrivals.

In Canada, children under 15 as well as the elderly are more likely than people in their middle years to be members of low income families. Differences between immigrant and non-immigrant children can be examined only for families that came to Canada in the 1961-1979 period. While 18% of all non-immigrant children were in the low income category in 1980, the corresponding percentage for immigrant children who

had arrived between 1960 and 1971 was 13%. For those who had come after 1971, the proportion was 20%.

Unattached individuals had a higher incidence of low income than did people living with their families. Overall, 42% of immigrants who were unattached individuals were in the low income group, a somewhat higher proportion than the 37% for their non-immigrant counterparts. The discrepancy was even greater among elderly unattached individuals: 62% of the immigrants were in the low income group as opposed to 54% of elderly non-immigrants.

\* Income figures exclude immigrants who arrived in 1980 and 1981.

\*\* For details see "Economic Families in Private Households, Income and Selected Characteristics", Catalogue No. 92-937, 1981 Census of Canada.



# ***HOUSING CONDITIONS***

A goal of many Canadians is to live in a single-detached home, and two-thirds of the non-immigrant population had achieved this goal in 1981. An immigrant's likelihood of living in such a home increased with length of residence in Canada. The proportion was about two-thirds for the pre-1961 group, but declined to 56% for the 1961-1971 group and to 42% for those who arrived after 1970.

A significant percentage of immigrants, especially recent arrivals, lived in high-rise apartments or other multiple-unit dwellings. Of the immigrants who came in the last decade, 16% were in high-rises and 41% in other multiples. By contrast, the corresponding figures for the non-immigrant population were 4% in high-rises and 26% in other multiples.

A smaller percentage of dwellings occupied by immigrants needed major repairs than did those occupied by non-immigrants. More than 7% of non-immigrants' homes required such repairs while this was the case for 5% of immigrants' homes. Even among the most recent arrivals, the percentage was lower than that for non-immigrants.

A dwelling that houses more than one person per room is considered crowded. Except for those who had arrived in the last decade, immigrants were less apt to live in crowded conditions than non-immigrants. About 5% of the non-immigrant population lived in dwellings with more than one person per room. This was true of just over 1% of immigrants who had come before 1961 and less than 5% of the 1961-1971 group. But among those who had arrived after 1970, the proportion was 17%.

Similarly, except for the latest arrivals, immigrants were less likely than non-immigrants to live in homes with five or more people per bathroom. Close to 15% of non-immigrants shared a bathroom with at least four other people. For immigrants who had come before 1961, the proportion was 4%, and for the 1961-1970 group, 8%. However, 17% of the 1971-1981 arrivals were in houses with five or more persons per bathroom.

Immigrants, regardless of when they came to Canada, were less likely than non-immigrants to live in a house without a bathroom, and also, were more likely to be in homes with more than one bathroom. While 1.4% of non-immigrants lived in homes without bathrooms, this was true of just 0.6% of immigrants. At the other end of the scale, 38% of non-immigrants lived in houses with more than one bathroom, in contrast to 51% of the immigrant group.

Table 8

**Selected Characteristics of Private Dwellings Occupied by the Immigrant and Non-immigrant Populations, by Period of Immigration, Canada, 1981**

Dwelling characteristics	Arrived before 1961	Arrived 1961-1970	Arrived 1971-1981	Total immigrants	Non-immigrants
	%	%	%	%	%
Major repairs needed	4.8	5.0	5.4	5.0	7.3
More than one person per room	1.3	4.6	17.4	6.9	5.1
Five or more persons per bathroom	4.2	8.4	16.6	8.9	14.7
No bathroom in dwelling	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.6	1.4

Source: 1981 Census of Canada.

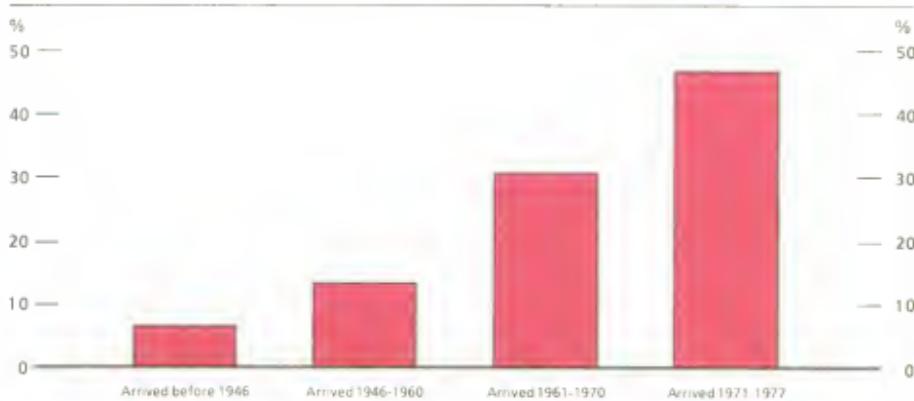
# *ACQUIRING CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP*

In 1976 a new Citizenship Act was passed. A major change introduced by the Act was the reduction of the minimum residence requirement from five to three years. Thus, at the time of the 1981 Census, 3.5 million immigrants were probably eligible for citizenship having arrived prior to 1978. Three-quarters of them had become citizens

The percentage of those with citizenship is related to period of immigration and age at immigration. More than 9 out of 10 who had arrived before 1946 had become citizens by 1981, as had close to 8 out of 10 who were younger than 15 when they immigrated. In contrast, just 53% who had immigrated in the last decade were citizens, and only 45% who had arrived when they were 65 years or over had obtained Canadian citizenship.

Chart 16

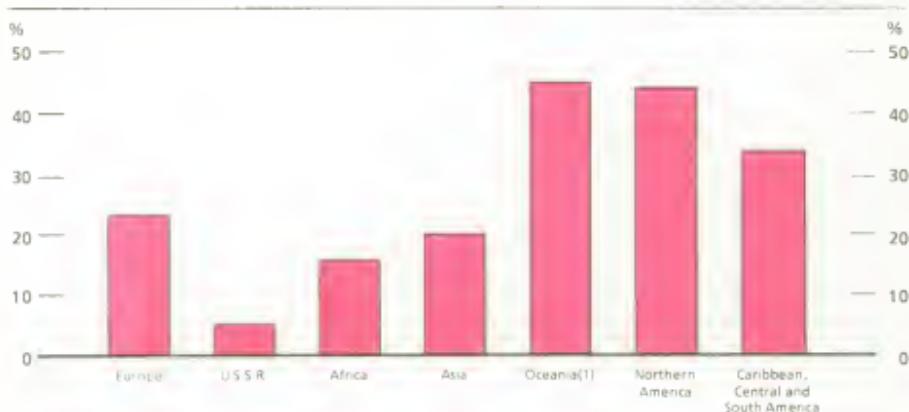
Percentage of Non-citizens among Immigrants, by Period of Immigration, Canada, 1981



Source: 1981 Census of Canada

Chart 11

## Percentage of Non-citizens among Immigrants, by Place of Birth, Canada, 1981



(1) Includes Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Islands such as Papua New Guinea, Guam and Fiji

Source 1981 Census of Canada

Birthplace is as important a factor as length of residence. Refugees or immigrants for whom Canada is an attractive alternative to returning to their country of birth have a high propensity to become citizens. Thus, among the most recent eligible immigrants, 84% who had come from Vietnam and 66% from India had obtained citizenship by 1981, but just 37% from Great Britain and 21% of those from the United States had done so.

## *IN SUMMARY*

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Results of the 1981 Census show that immigrants who had settled in Canada had achieved a standard of living which frequently exceeded that of the Canadian-born population. To some extent, such results may reflect demographic factors and immigration policies which tied admission to education and occupational qualifications, but they must also indicate personal initiative and willingness to adapt to a new national home.

The immigrant population of 1981 is shown to be, more often than not, older than other Canadians, better educated, better housed, more likely to be employed, more likely to live in a husband-wife family. For some decades immigrants have settled in cities; few now turn to farming as a vocation.

The picture for the most recent immigrants is not quite so bright, but since these persons have had less time to adapt to their new surroundings this is not unexpected. However, their situation does not differ to the extent that overall comparisons are reversed.

Canada has taken a census of population every ten years from 1851 and every five years from 1956. The last census was taken on June 3, 1981. The census data constitute the most important single source of information on the population of Canada by many geographic areas from the national and provincial levels down to smaller groups such as cities, towns and municipalities. These data include: information on the number of people who live in Canada; their characteristics such as age, sex, marital status, language, educational level and occupation; number and types of families; and types of dwellings. Census information is used for a variety of purposes by private individuals, governments at all levels, educational institutions, business people and other organizations.

As part of a program to supplement 1981 Census statistical reports, a special series of popular studies has been undertaken on selected topics of public interest. Each study is a description of major trends and patterns. The data used are from the 1981 Census and other relevant sources. This series is designed for use at the high school and community college levels. However, it could also be of interest to the general public.

CANADA'S IMMIGRANTS is one of the reports in this series. It brings together under one cover highlights of information about that part of the population who arrived in Canada as immigrants. Other studies in the series are being published at about the same time or within the next few months.

The manuscript for this study was prepared in the Social Statistics Field by M.S. Devereaux.

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